

JOHN

Ah Spring is just
around the corner

- ◆ Dr. Franklin and the Stamp Act
- ◆ The Coal Shed
- ◆ Sarah Langley in Service
- ◆ Fresh Flowers



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Welcome to JOHN

Time for Spring! The hummingbird feeders will be out soon to welcome these wonderful guests that stop for a much needed treat.

This issue marks one year of JOHN that continues to tell stories of interest in small bursts that can be readily enjoyed without disruption to the daily busy schedule we all experience.

In 1765 the British Parliament passed the Stamp Act. This act placed a tax on all printed materials in the American colonies. A firestorm of protest erupted. Colonists believed the taxes were unfair. They passed resolutions calling for the repeal of the Stamp Act. Americans refused to use the stamps and boycotted British imports, forcing Parliament to reassess its policy. Benjamin Franklin testified against the Stamp Act before the British House of Commons in February 1766. While there is so much on-line regarding Dr. Franklin's testimony including all the questions he was asked to answer, I thought a brief background would be most interesting to all.

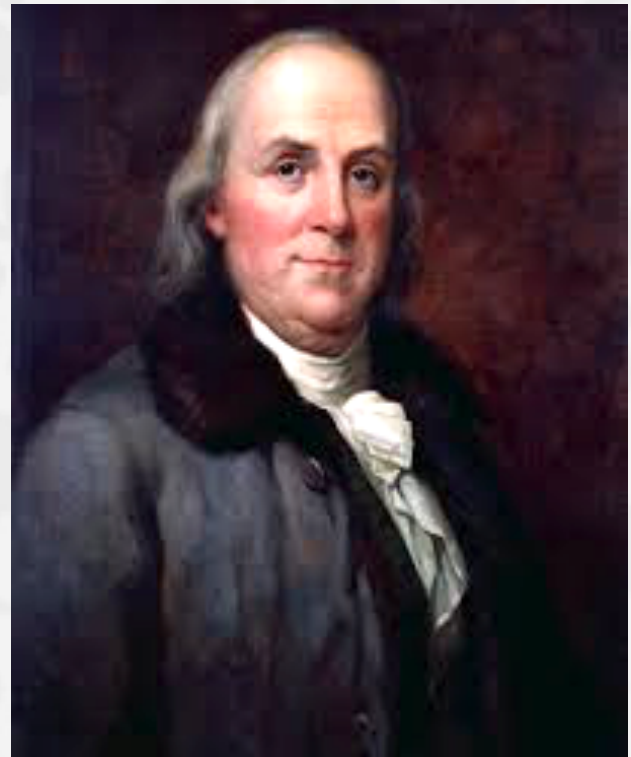
The story of the Coal Shed recalls my growing up years, especially during Jr. and Sr. high school. Many of us kids had chores to do, some that were hard and not very pleasant like the ones that a lot of the farm boys and girls had to do. My chores took on a more moderate manner and at times I even enjoyed doing them. Included is the memory story of one of my main chores and my humble attempt to capture through a drawing of what I remember about how our coal shed looked and served us well.

I would be remiss not to continue to recognize Sarah Langley who along with so many other veterans spend a significant amount of their time to support past, present and future Service Members in many different ways. Sarah is dedicated to what she does and proudly accepted the NMDAR Women in Service Award from the Charles Dibrell Chapter, Chaplain Christine Holley.

Sarah is one fine lady and a proud veteran.

JAH

During a long and extraordinarily full life, Benjamin Franklin lived in London and Paris almost continuously from 1757 to 1785. In those twenty-eight years, he spent less than four at home in Philadelphia. His first mission to London, as Pennsylvania's colonial agent, lasted from 1757 to September 1762. He returned to London in 1764 shortly before the passage of the Stamp Act, and remained there until the eve of the Revolution, in March 1775. In October 1776, soon after signing the Declaration of Independence he left secretly on his important diplomatic mission to France. He remained in Paris until 1785, two years after the signing of the peace agreements with England. He took part in the drafting of the Constitution in 1787, and died, aged eighty-four, on April 17, 1790.



Franklin was fifty-one when he began his long sojourn abroad. He was in his prime, full of physical and intellectual vigor, successful in an amazing range of commercial, journalistic, scientific, educational, philosophical, military, and political pursuits: As a young man, he started his own printing business in Philadelphia; either founded or helped found an insurance company and a fire company, the first public library, the first public hospital, the University of Pennsylvania, a colonial postal service, and a rudimentary public health system and he was an author with many writings.

He was the preeminent First Citizen of the American colonies, foremost in authority and political experience, possessed of a broad knowledge of the colonies and their political leaders, gained during his travels as organizer of the infant postal service. He was a generation older than the men who would become famous during the Revolution: In 1757, Washington was twenty-five; John Adams was twenty-two; John Hancock, twenty. Thomas Jefferson was only fourteen; James Madison was a child of six; and Alexander Hamilton was only a baby.

When it became apparent that the Stamp Act would be passed, Benjamin Franklin's attitude toward the Stamp Act then swung from apathy to feverish lobbying activity. Franklin wrote to his wife, "I am excessively hurried, being every hour that I am awake, either abroad to speak to Members of Parliament, or taken up with People coming at home concerning our American Affairs." All of this turned out to be preparation for Franklin's finest hour of all his years in London: four hours of wide-ranging, lucid, oral testimony under intensive questioning before the House of Commons on the case for repeal of the Stamp Act.

Note: The origins of this story comes mostly from a review of **The Long Fuse**, written by Don Cook, published by the Altantic Monthly Press published in 1995.

Franklin Testifies

Benjamin Franklin was a prolific writer of elegant and lively prose, and he was a stimulating conversationalist on an endless variety of topics. But he was not a public speaker, let alone an orator. Thomas Jefferson once said of both Franklin and Washington that he "never heard either of them speak ten minutes at a time, nor to any but the main point that was to decide the question. They laid their shoulders to great points knowing that the little ones would follow of themselves." This was well suited to the give-and-take of questions and answers that Franklin was about to undergo before the House of Commons. In the most courteous and restrained manner, with lucidity, clarity and an economy of words, with a wealth of facts and figures and precision of ideas, with skill at rejecting without giving offense, Franklin put on a bravura performance before supporters and critics of America. Dressed in a plain suit of brown cloth, unattached by any finery, he stood between the rows of opposing benches. At the speaker's request, he identified himself, simply as Franklin of Philadelphia. Questions began at once. It was four hours before the Commons finished and Franklin could sit down.

When Franklin saw a copy of the record of his testimony, he tried to identify from memory as accurately as possible who each of his questioners had been. He numbered each of the 174 questions on the record, noting that others had been asked but not recorded. Then he noted either a name or a general identification, such as "adversary" or "by Friends" and added comments of his own. The order of questioning was spontaneous, however, with plenty of opposition voices. In the end, Franklin listed 89 of the questions as having come from hostile members who were opposed to repeal of the Stamp Act.



Short Summary of the Q & A

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, Testimony before the House of Commons relating to the repeal of the Stamp Act, 13 Feb. 1766.

Q. Was it an opinion in America before 1763 that the Parliament had no right to lay taxes and duties there?

A. I never heard any objection to the right of laying duties to regulate commerce; but a right to lay internal taxes was never supposed to be in Parliament, as we are not represented there.

Q. On what do you found your opinion that the people in America made any such distinction?

A. I know that whenever the subject has occurred in conversation where I have been present, it has appeared to be the opinion of everyone that we could not be taxed in a Parliament where we were not represented. But the payment of duties laid by act of Parliament, as regulations of commerce, was never disputed.

Q. You say the Colonies have always submitted to external taxes, and object to the right of Parliament only in laying internal taxes; now can you show that there is any kind of difference between the two taxes to the Colony on which they may be laid?

A. I think the difference is very great. An external tax is a duty laid on commodities imported; that duty is added to the first cost, and other charges on the commodity, and when it is offered to sale, makes a part of the price. If the people do not like it at that price, they refuse it; they are not obliged to pay it. But an internal tax is forced from the people without their consent, if not laid by their own representatives. The Stamp Act says we shall have no commerce, make no exchange of property with each other, neither purchase nor grant, nor recover debts; we shall neither marry, nor make our wills, unless we pay such and such sums, and thus it is intended to extort our money from us, or ruin us by the consequences of refusing to pay it. Colony, will not that be the same thing in its effects as an internal tax?

Q. Are not all the people very able to pay those taxes?

A. No. The frontier counties, all along the continent, having been frequently ravaged by the enemy and greatly impoverished, are able to pay very little tax. And therefore, in consideration of their distresses, our late tax laws do expressly favor the counties, excusing the sufferers; and I suppose the same is done to other governments.

Q. But supporting the external tax or duty to be laid on the necessities of life imported into your Colony, will not be the same thing in its effect as an internal tax?

A. I do not know a single article imported into the Northern Colonies but what they can either do without or make themselves.

Q. Don't you think cloth from England absolutely necessary to them?

A. No, by no means absolutely necessary; with industry and good management, they may very well supply themselves with all they want.

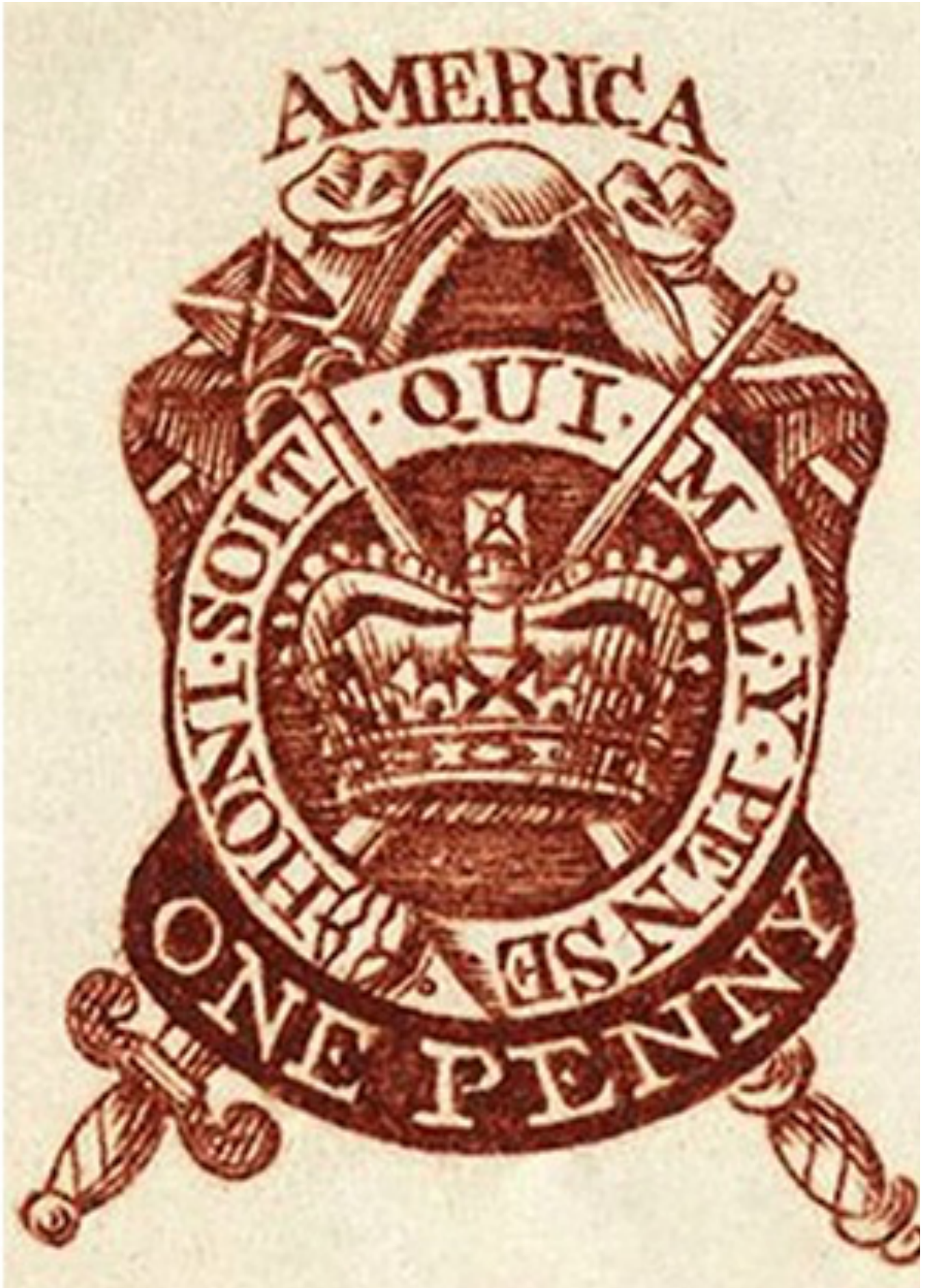
Q. Can anything less than a military force carry the Stamp Act into execution?

A. I do not see how a military force can be applied to that purpose.

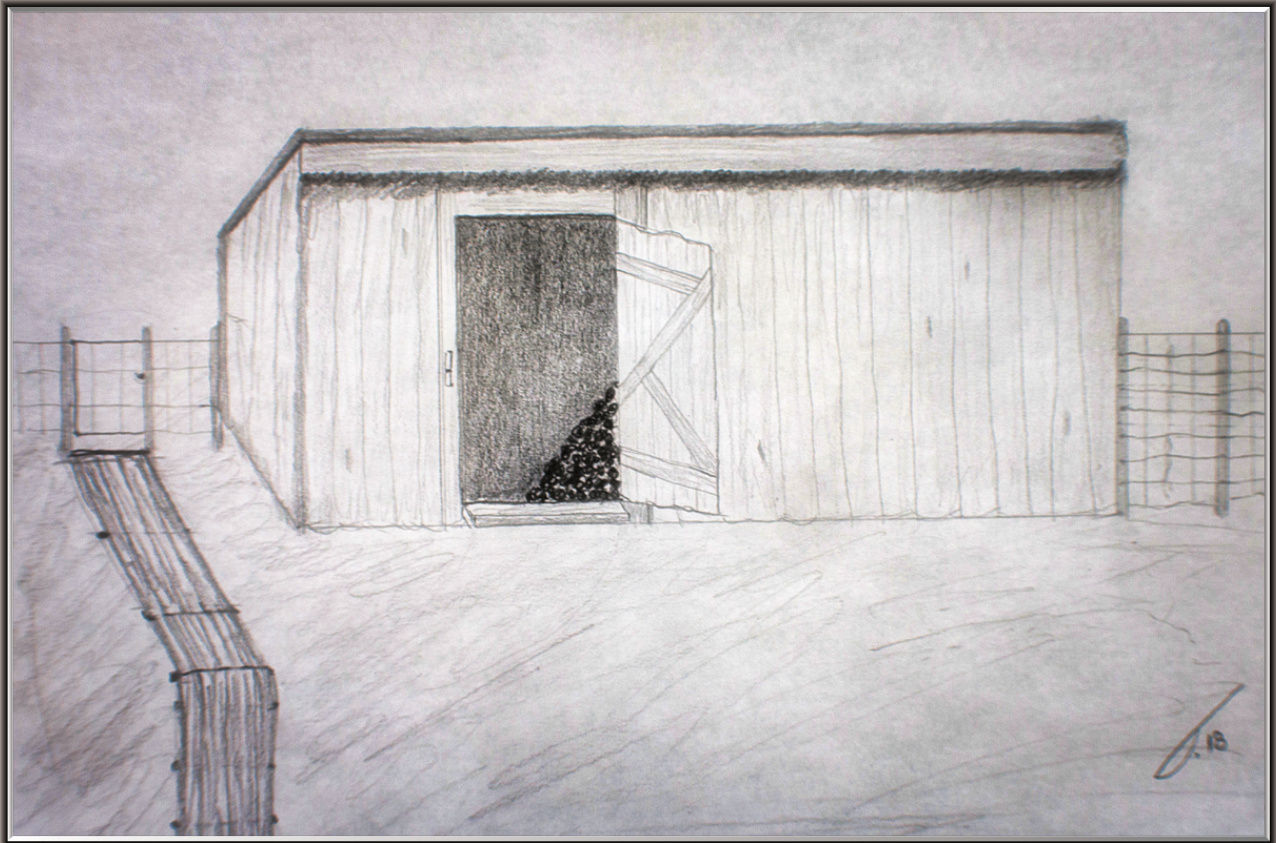
Q. Why may it not?

A. Suppose a military force sent into America, they will find nobody in arms; what are they then to do? They cannot force a man to take stamps who chooses to do without them. They will not find a rebellion; they may indeed make one.

The Stamp



The Coal Shed



My main winter time chore was to fill the coal buckets from the coal shed. This shed was an old chicken coop. Long before we moved in, someone had enlarged it and also put a large window on the alley side so that the coal could be "shuttled" right into the shed from the coal truck. It had a door that looked like a barn door on the other side, I was always careful to keep it closed when not actually filling the buckets. It was strange that different types of creatures loved to get in there when no one was around, not to mention the pigeons. Since my dad worked at the mine, we always got a small discount on the price of the coal. One of my jobs was to alert my dad when we needed a new load of coal, he would always ask me how much was left in the shed, but I always knew that he already had been watching the pile in the shed going down, but he always expected me to tell him anyway.

Sometimes it was miserable to struggle to get four buckets of small lump coal plus one bucket of large pieces, "stokers" as we called them, for the heater in the living room and to stock it for the overnight warmth. They were slow burning and often did last through the night.



When it was snowy and cold and you needed a flashlight to see what you were doing, believe me I got it done as fast as I could. Other times during the winter, when there was still light in the evening and the weather was cold but clear, the coal shed became both a place of discovery and play. I became very familiar with the look and feel of coal. And was often surprised to find a fossil imprint or a



piece of limestone rock in the lump of coal. I guess you could say I was the quality expert because my dad would always ask if the coal was "clean" and didn't have rock in it. He expected me to throw those aside and not bring them into the house. If anything other than coal was in a piece and it ended up in the hot stove, it was sometimes a struggle to get that molted mass out of the coal grate. My folks didn't let me do this, it was always up to them with their thick gloves and poker and small coal shovel.

I must have looked that coal over pretty good, because this didn't happen too often. That brings us to another chore that I was spared mostly by my dear mother. When coal burns it creates a lot of hot ash which falls into a large pan at the bottom of the stove, the stove grate also had a "shaker" that would rattle the hot ash down into the pan. Since my dad most always worked nights in the mine, mom would have the task of emptying the ash pans when needed. She would not let me near this task and as I look back on it, I realize now just how dangerous it was to move the very hot ashes from the stove to the ash pit out back. She was good at it and we never had a fire, thank God. It did happen from time to time in the community when someone was careless with handling these ashes.

My chore of bringing in the coal was not needed during the summer time. My chores turned to taking care of the lawn watering and cutting, no power mower here, just the good old fashioned push mower and since the town did not have much water for lawn watering, I often had to cut my playing time to run home and water during the designated watering hours. No need to ask how attached I became to that old coal shed, just ask to see the large piece of coal that I still have carefully wrapped up in wax paper and plastic and stored in my dad's miners bucket that I wrote about for the last issue of JOHN.



Sarah Langley

*Past District Commander
of AMVET in NM is
currently, National
Executive Committee
person for AMVETS
(American Veterans).*

Sarah Langley and her sister joined the Army in 1961 in Kansas City, Mo, staying in until 1965.

When her husband retired from the Army in 1971, they moved to Albuquerque. Joining AMVETS Post 7 in 1985, she started helping with the ROTC program in 1991. The Post presents between 40 to 45 JROTC/ROTC medals and certificates every year at 22 high schools and UMN. Sarah usually presents at approximately 15 -17 schools herself and drives as far as 80 miles to Grants, NM to present.

Sarah Langley receives award from NMDAR Charles Dibrell Chapter, Chaplain Christine Holley

Madam Regent, Madam State Regent & guests, today I'm pleased & honored to present a "Women in American History Award" to a lady I met about 5 yrs. ago.



Back in the spring of 2012, Meg asked me if I would like to present a JrROTC award at the Cleveland High School in Rio Rancho. Being new & willing, I said, "Sure, no problem!" I arrived at the school a bit nervous – not knowing what exactly to do, but a lovely, sweet lady was there who calmed my nerves & said, "Oh, no problem you just"

Many of you are probably used to seeing her at the various schools when you present your DAR awards. Every year at ROTC awards time, she is always there, no matter what school I go to - I'm no longer nervous, but I'm always happy to see her! I'd like to share with you a little background on my nomination for this Woman In American History Award, for Sarah A. Langley:

Sarah is the Past District Commander of AMVETs or the American Veterans, organization in New Mexico & is currently the National Executive Committee person for AMVETS. She & her sister joined the Army in 1961 in Kansas City, Mo. staying in until 1965. She got married & when her husband retired from the Army in 1971, they moved to Albuquerque. She joined the AMVET Post #7 in 1985. This group presents between 40 to 45 ROTC medals & certificates every year at 22 area high schools & UNM. Sarah usually presents at approximately 15 – 17 schools herself & has traveled as far as 80 miles to Grants, NM to present. Every year when I see her, I am always amazed at Sarah's energy & dedication in recognizing these students in the ROTC programs.

Sarah, it is my pleasure to present to you, on behalf of the Charles Dibrell Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, this Women In American History award for your service to this country & to the young students of our area ROTC Programs. Thank you for your service and congratulations!

On Jan.24, 2018, Christine Holley presented a Women In American History Award from the Charles Dibrell, DAR Chapter to a lovely lady (Army Veteran) Sarah Langley for the work she does for our area JROTC / ROTC programs in the Albuquerque area. She in turn presented Christine with this beautiful Challenge Coin!

Thank you Sarah for such a beautiful & meaningful gift!!



FRESH FLOWERS



The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched -- they must be felt with the heart.

By Helen Keller